

t a n g e n t . w i n e s

our vineyards

EDNA VALLEY

Designated an American Viticultural Area in 1982, the Edna Valley is indeed a very special place. Classified as a Region I on the Winkler/Amerine heat summation scale, it ranks as one of the coolest growing regions worldwide. Contrary to most topography in California whereby the valleys run north-south, the Edna Valley lies east-west, resulting in one of the few transverse valleys recognized as an AVA. This unique configuration allows fog and breezes to be pulled directly from the Pacific Ocean, only four miles away. The result is an even, temperate climate, providing a longer than usual growing season for winegrapes. Not only is bud-break two to three weeks earlier than other regions in the state, the clusters hang a couple of weeks longer just before harvest. This extended hang time allows each berry to develop intense, pure varietal character while retaining the great acid structure that is the backbone of tangent's wines. It also allows the winemaker the luxury of picking at a wide range of Brix and pH levels, knowing that the grapes will reach full maturity each vintage.

PARAGON VINEYARD

Planted by Jack and Catharine Niven in 1973, Paragon Vineyard stands as a testament to both good business acumen and sheer nerve. On a hunch, Jack hired professors from both U.C. Davis and U.C. Fresno to determine unique regions to plant vines on California's Central Coast. They individually came back to him with glowing reports, and independently of each other recommended the Edna Valley. One would expect that the first commercially planted vineyard in the valley would be modest; logically it would test the academic

findings and substantiate the investment. Not Jack. He planted an astounding 547 acres to Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Semillon, Gamay Beaujolais, and Chenin Blanc. Jack's gamble paid off; the Edna Valley turned out to be a brilliant place to grow most of these varieties. As he learned what flourished and what struggled he began an ongoing program to expand the vineyard, and to graft over some of the weaker varieties in order to specialize in what worked best. The vineyard is now 872 acres, consisting of Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Albariño, Riesling, Viognier, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah.

Parts of Paragon Vineyard are on the valley floor, the balance on hillsides leading to foothills. The flatland soils are made up primarily of Diablo series clays and cropley clay. These are surprisingly well-draining, as the absence of silt is remarkable. The hillsides are terra sandy loam, formed in old alluvium and weathered on sedimentary rocks. The mustard that seasonally grows between the rows of vines is a sure indicator of the rich magnesium throughout the vineyard. Magnesium is valuable, as it ties up the potassium and forces the vines to stress and strain to get the most benefit. This struggle ultimately produces fruit of intense concentration.

